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(54) Abstract Title

Personal care kit with dispenser unit in closure means

(57) A personal care kit, especially a women's sanitary kit, comprises: a tubular casing defining one or more chambers 32 for containing one or more personal care, eg. sanitary, items, the chamber 32 being provided with removable closure means 34, 36; wherein the closure means incorporates a dispenser unit 34, preferably a spray dispenser, eg. an aerosol, for delivering a personal care product therefrom. The kit conveniently enables a variety of personal care items, plus a spray dispenser, to be accommodated within a compact, readily portable, discreet unit which can for example be designed to resemble in size and shape a conventional aerosol can. The chamber 32 may contain a disc 40 which can be lifted by a handle 42, 43 to eject items from the chamber. The casing may include an additional, separate chamber beneath chamber 32 and having its own removable closure means at the base of the casing (Figures 1-3).

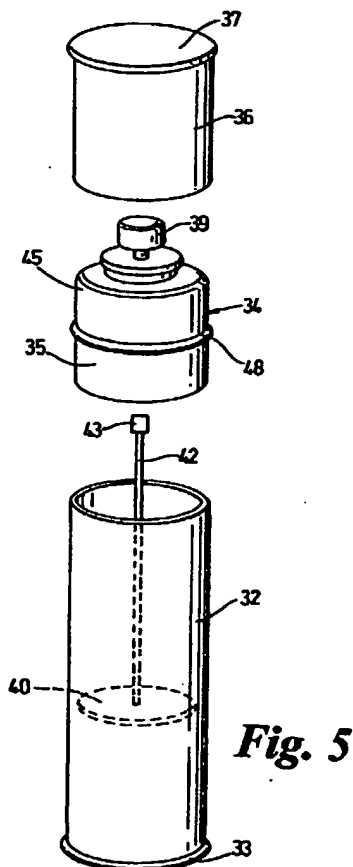


Fig. 5

GB 2 374 853 A

1/5

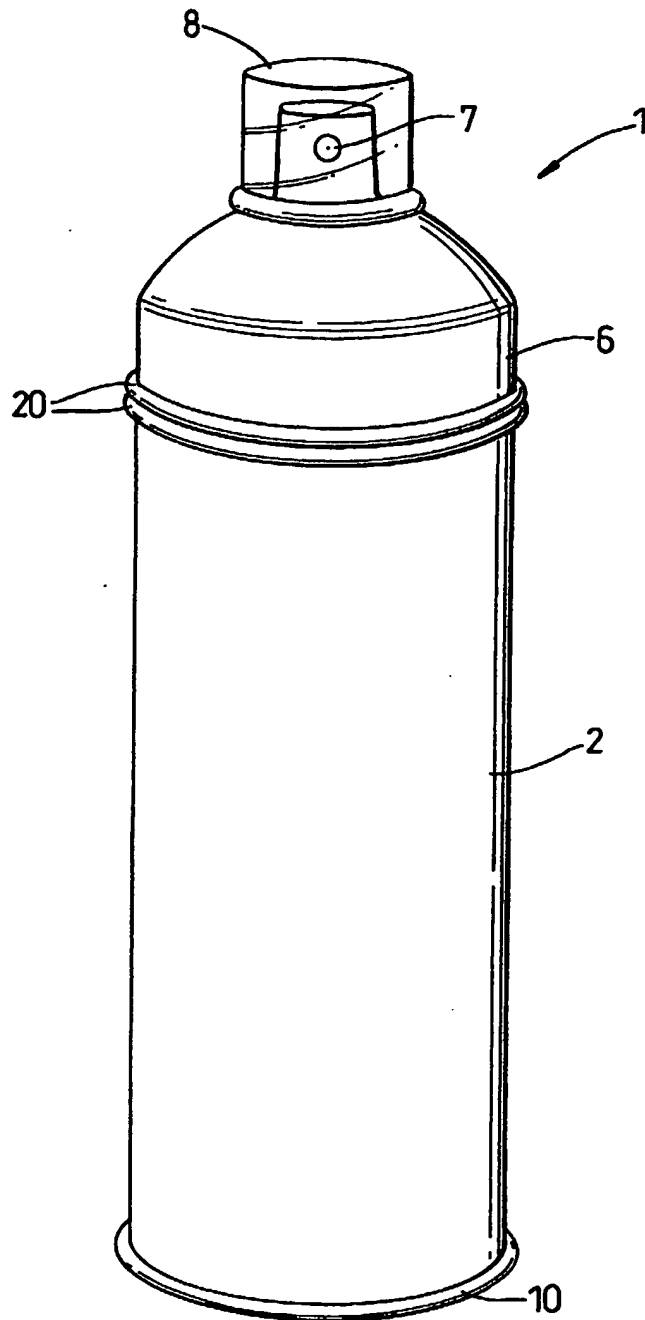


Fig. 1

2/5

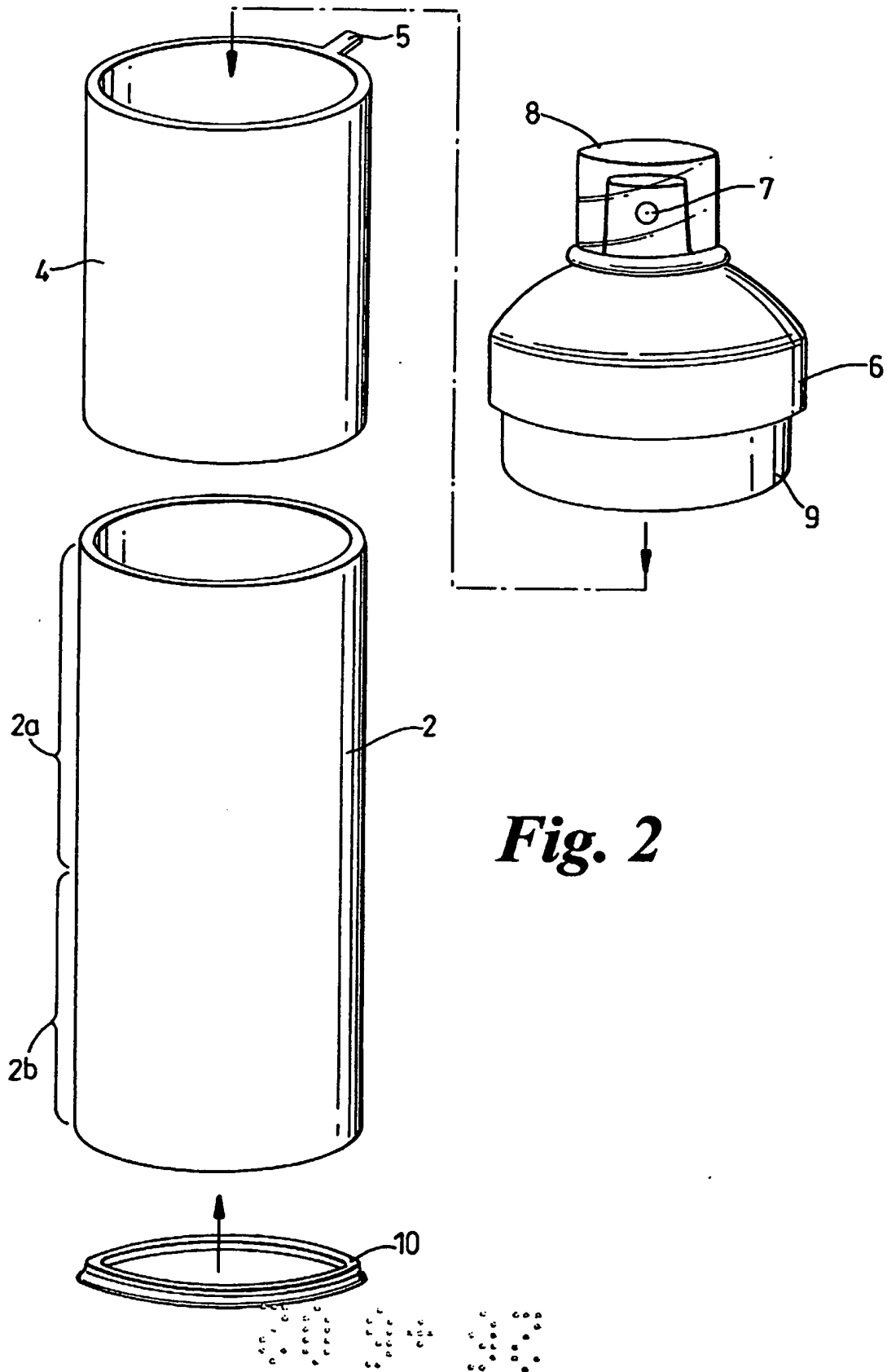


Fig. 2

3/5

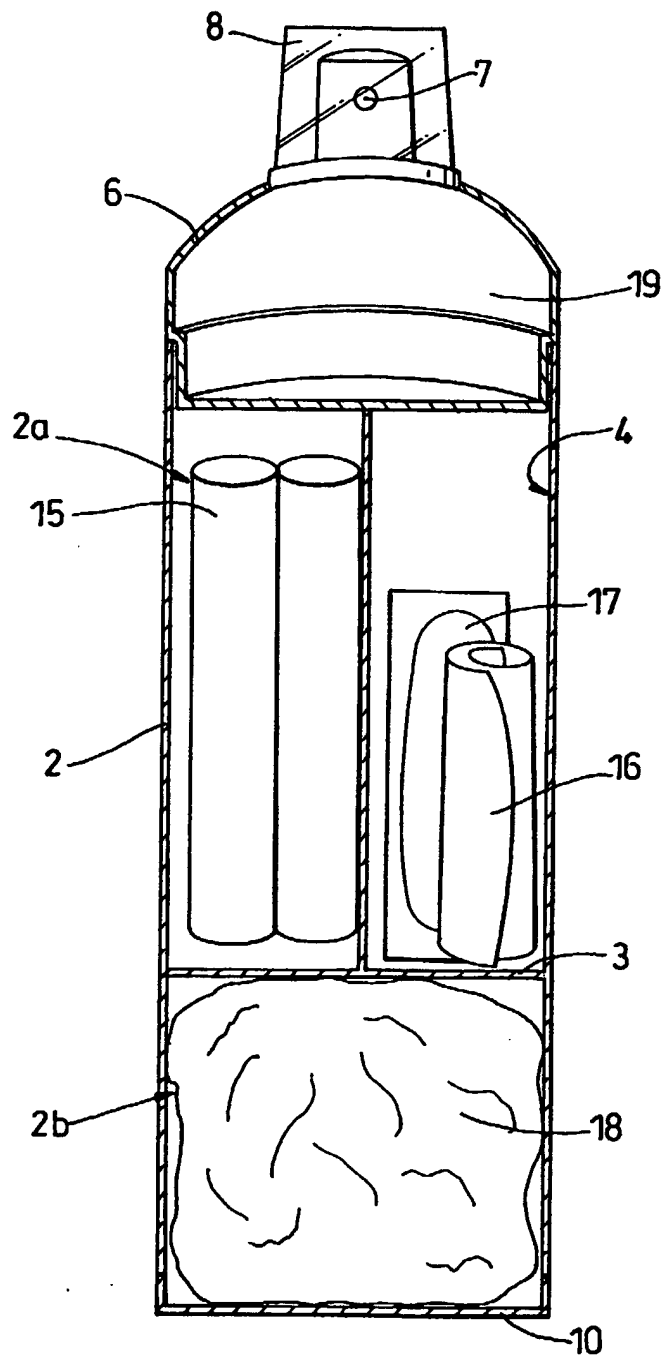


Fig. 3

4/5

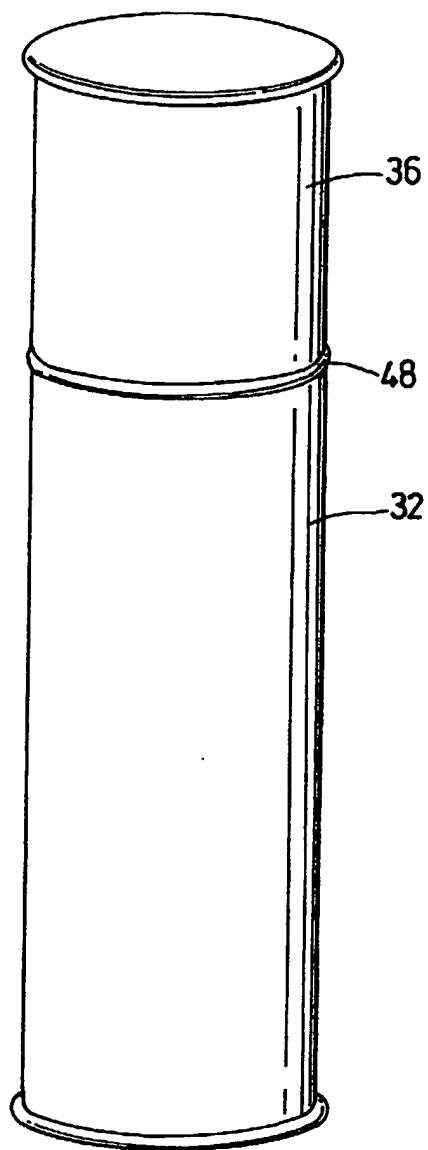


Fig. 4

5/5

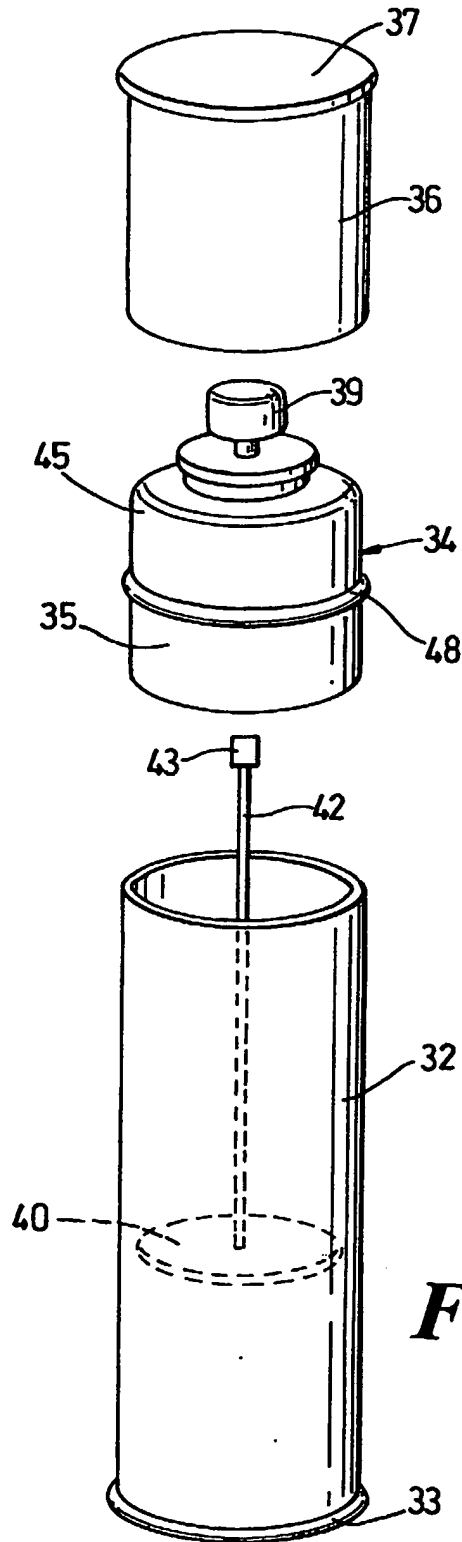


Fig. 5

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PERSONAL CARE KIT

This invention relates to a personal care kit. It is particularly applicable to a women's sanitary kit containing a variety of personal care items which a woman typically needs whilst having her period. However, the invention can also be applied to a medical kit containing a variety of items typically needed in the provision of first aid, or even a travel kit containing a variety of items typically needed when travelling or on holiday, or possibly an incontinence kit containing a variety of everyday items typically needed by people experiencing that condition, or even a men's toiletry kit containing shaving equipment and other typical male toiletries. The invention relates more specifically to the container in which the items of any of these kinds of kits are housed.

In the context of a woman's or girl's everyday needs while on her period (time of menstruation), it is difficult to provide all the necessary personal care items that she typically needs on a regular basis throughout the day in a convenient, small, compact and discreet form. The same is true of the other kinds of kits mentioned above. Apart from carrying all the necessary items of such kits loose in a bag, the only other alternative is to carry them in some sort of container. However, no such containers exist which are designed specifically for this purpose and are able to satisfy a person's personal needs, especially a woman's when on her period, with respect to size, compactness, convenience and discreetness.

It is an object of this invention, therefore, to address this problem and provide a personal care kit, such as a woman's sanitary kit, which is based on a novel construction of container in which the various personal care items of the kit are housed.

Accordingly, in a first aspect the present invention provides a personal care kit comprising:

a tubular casing defining a chamber containing one or more personal care items, the chamber being provided with removable closure means;

wherein the removable closure means incorporates a dispenser unit for delivering a personal care product therefrom.

In practical forms of the invention the tubular casing is preferably cylindrical, although other cross-sectional shapes are possible. The tubular casing forms the main component of the container for the kit and, for reasons of discreetness, is preferably shaped and dimensioned so that the complete kit resembles the size and shape of a conventional aerosol can. With such a casing the container will have sufficient internal space to house the various personal care items of the kit that may typically be desired to be included in it, yet be of a compact, convenient and discreet size to be readily carriable for example in a handbag.

In embodiments of the invention the tubular casing may take various forms, in particular to define either a single chamber for containing the one or more personal care items or alternatively distinct upper and lower chambers each for containing one or more such items.

In a first preferred embodiment of the invention the tubular casing defines upper and lower chambers each for containing one or more of the said personal care items, the upper chamber being provided with the said removable closure means incorporating the said dispenser unit, and the lower chamber being provided with its own removable closure means.

The upper and lower chambers of the casing may be defined by a dividing wall or an internal flange, or possibly one or more ledges or lugs, which are preferably integral with the main tubular walls of the casing. The upper and lower chambers may be of the same height or alternatively different heights in order to provide greater flexibility of the kinds and/or locations of personal care items that may be contained in the kit.

In a second, more preferred, embodiment of the invention the tubular casing defines just a single chamber for containing the one or more personal care items.

In practical forms of either of the above embodiments the dispenser unit preferably includes a reservoir for containing the personal care product to be dispensed. Preferably this will be a sprayable liquid product, such as a deodorant, antiperspirant, perfume or body spray. Accordingly, the dispenser unit is preferably a spray dispenser unit, such as an aerosol dispenser or alternatively a pump-action spray dispenser.

In practical examples of personal care kits according to the invention, the closure means for the chamber which houses the one or more personal care items and which comprises the said product dispenser unit preferably also comprises a removable lid section which fits thereover. The lid section may be of any suitable size and shape. It may for example fit over just the nozzle portion of the dispenser unit, or more preferably it may substantially fully enclose the upper part of the dispenser unit exposed from the tubular casing. The latter has the advantage that the lower periphery of the lid can be made to match the upper rim of the casing, so that when the lid is in place the dispenser unit is not visible from the outside and the casing plus lid combination assumes a neat, compact and unitary appearance. The lid section may be securable onto the casing chamber by any suitable means, for example with an internally or externally fitting push-fit, bayonet or screw-threaded means of attachment.

Likewise, in practical versions of the first embodiment of the invention in which there is a separate lower one of two chambers which does not carry a dispenser unit, the closure for this chamber may be of any of the above same possibilities.

In practical examples of personal care kits according to either of the above first or second embodiments of the invention, removal of the one or more personal

care items from the or their respective chamber is preferably assisted either by virtue of them being contained in a tubular receptacle itself housed within the chamber or alternatively by virtue of there being located in the base of the chamber a seating disc above which the items sit and which is removable from the chamber preferably by an upstanding pull-tab.

In the case of the removable tubular receptacle, this receptacle may typically have a geometrically similar cross-sectional shape to the chamber in which it is to be located such as to be slidable therewithin with a snug sliding fit. The receptacle preferably has a closed bottom, but in which there may if necessary be formed one or more through-holes for the expelling of air as the receptacle is slid into the chamber. The receptacle may if desired have a plurality of separate compartments defined by an appropriate number and positioning of internal walls within its internal space. There may conveniently be provided a pull-tab attached to the upper edge of the receptacle to assist in manually removing it from the chamber when desired.

In the case of the seating disc, preferably with the elongate pull-tab attached thereto, this will generally be more preferred than the above tubular receptacle, given the lesser amount, and consequently weight, of material necessary in the construction of the overall kit. The seating disc may conveniently be dimensioned so as to have a diameter a little less (eg. approximately a millimetre or two) than the internal diameter of the chamber, so as to provide an air gap between its edges and the inner wall of the chamber, again to allow egress of air as the disc is inserted into the chamber.

The personal care items to be included in the kit of the invention may be any of a wide variety of things, depending principally on the kind of kit it is to be. A particularly useful example is a women's sanitary kit, for use when she is having her period and to provide her with an increased degree of confidence, or to younger girls who are due to start their periods. In this case the kit may contain,

by way of example, any (and any number) of the following: tampons, panty liners, sanitary disposal bags, disinfectant or fresh wipes, condoms, spare underwear.

In versions of the kit of the invention which are destined for other applications, their contents of personal care items will be appropriate to their intended use. For example: a medical kit may contain some or all of the things normally found in a first aid kit (eg. plasters, dressings, bandages, cotton wool/pads, sticky tape, disinfectants, antiseptic or other treatment creams, tweezers, scissors, pins, pharmaceuticals); a travel kit may contain things like everyday toiletries, sun cream, sunburn treatment agents, insect repellent, and such like; and a men's toiletry kit may contain things like shaving cream, razor(s), aftershave, as well as other typical male toiletries.

In practical examples of the personal care kits according to the present invention the various components, in particular the main tubular casing and the product dispenser unit, but also the various lid components (to the extent provided), may all conveniently be formed from moulded plastics material. Lightweight metal for any of these components is also possible, but the most convenient materials will generally be determined according to well established wisdom in the art, for example with respect to ease of moulding/shaping, cost, structural strength and integrity, and weight.

Personal care kits according to the invention may be provided and sold as complete units in their own right, already filled with a preselected collection of the relevant personal care items. Then, as the contents are used, the consumer may refill the kit as appropriate or according to her/his wishes or needs.

Alternatively, the basic container for the kit may be provided and sold separately, leaving it to the consumer to fill it with whatever contents she/he wishes or needs. Also, the product dispenser unit may if desired be supplied for purchase separately as a discrete component, or a pack of two, three or more

such components, each with a different product therein, for appropriate selection by the consumer in the everyday use of the kit.

Examples of each of the first and second preferred embodiments of the personal care kit of the present invention will now be described in detail, with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a complete kit according to the first embodiment;

Figure 2 is an exploded perspective view of the container of this first embodiment showing its various components and how they fit together;

Figure 3 is a part-sectional side view of the complete kit of Figure 1 showing the various components of the container and the exemplary sanitary items of the kit contained therein;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of a complete kit according to the second embodiment of the invention;

Figure 5 is an exploded perspective view of the container of the kit of Figure 4, showing its various components and how they fit together.

Referring firstly to the embodiment of Figures 1 to 3, which in this example is in the form of a women's sanitary kit, the container indicated generally as 1 (which is represented in the drawings as roughly actual size) comprises main cylindrical outer casing 2 within which are contained various items of the sanitary kit. Within the casing 2 are upper and lower chambers 2a, 2b for housing the various sanitary items, the chambers being defined by an internal dividing wall (or flange) 3 integral with the casing wall.

The lower chamber 2b of the casing 2 is closed by a removable push-fitting lower lid 10, which allows access to the lower chamber and its contents as and when desired. The upper chamber 2a is closed by a push-fitting (or alternatively bayonet or half-screw or similar attaching) aerosol spray dispenser 6, via lower extending flange 9 (Figure 2).

The aerosol dispenser 6, apart from being a closure element for the upper chamber 2a, incorporates a reservoir 19 containing a conventional aerosol composition (such as a deodorant, perfume, body spray or other personal care product) for delivery from nozzle 7, which is closed and protected by a removable plastic lid 8.

As shown in Figure 2, the upper chamber 2a of the casing 2 has inserted within it a tubular receptacle 4 for containing some of the sanitary items of the kit. This tubular receptacle 4 is for example split into two compartments by an internal dividing wall and fits snugly within the upper chamber 2a of the casing 2. It also has a pull-tab 5 attached to its upper edge to assist in its removal from the casing as or when desired.

As shown in Figure 1, the joint between the main outer casing 2 and the aerosol dispenser 6 may be defined by mutually contacting annular lips 20 provided on each of the respective components, in order to assist in the removal of the lid from the casing, or for cosmetic reasons.

As discussed above, the sanitary kit of this embodiment of the invention may contain any number and type of sanitary and/or personal care items that the consumer may want on a day-to-day basis. By way of example only, and as shown in Figure 3, the lower chamber 2b may contain a spare pair of underwear 18, the receptacle 4 inside the upper chamber 2a may contain two tampons 15 (and/or two sanitary disposal bags) in one of its compartments and two panty liners 16 and two condoms 17 (and/or two fresh wipes) in the other of its compartments. The aerosol dispenser 6 may for example contain in its reservoir 19 an amount (eg. anything from about 10 to about 50 mls) of a commercially available body spray composition.

Referring now to the embodiment of Figures 4 and 5, the same possibilities for the various personal care items and the sprayable product of the kit as discussed above apply to this second version, but here the construction of the container is different, and at present especially preferred.

As shown in Figure 5, the tubular casing 32, eg. of moulded plastics material, defines just a single cylindrical chamber therewithin for containing the various personal care items. The bottom of the casing is sealed with an integrally moulded base 33. Into its upper mouth fits, by push-fitting by virtue of appropriate dimensioning, the lower portion 35 of plastics-moulded pump-action spray dispenser 34, which lower portion 35 (possibly also with the dispenser's upper portion 45) also acts as the reservoir for the product to be dispensed from it.

The upper portion 45 of the spray dispenser 34, which is separated from the lower portion thereof by circumferential shoulder 48, includes the pump-action spray mechanism, which is of any conventional type (including finger-operated plunger/nozzle 39). Onto the upper portion 45 of the spray dispenser fits, again by an appropriately dimensioned push-fit, the upper lid section 36 of the unit. The lid section 36 is in the form of a cylinder, sealed with an integrally moulded flat top 37 to match the base 33, and which matches the shape and dimensions of the main casing 32 when the unit is fully assembled, so as to resemble a conventional aerosol container, as shown in Figure 4.

Located within the tubular casing 32 is a plastics seating disc 40, to which is attached an elongate substantially rigid plastics pull-tab 42 with a graspable handle 43 at its upper end, and which is slidable within the casing 32. The disc is dimensioned to define an air-gap, eg. of about a millimetre or so, between its edge and the inner wall of the casing to allow air to escape as the disc is pushed into the casing.

In readiness for use of the container the seating disc 40 is inserted into the casing as shown in Figure 5 using the pull-tab 42, until it reaches the base of the chamber. Then the various selected personal care items can be inserted into the chamber. When removal of the items is required, they can simply be ejected from the chamber by grasping the handle 43 of the pull-tab 42 and pulling the disc 40 up and perhaps even out of the chamber 32, thereby bringing the items out with it.

It will be appreciated that the above description of examples of preferred embodiments of the invention has been by way of non-limiting example only, and various modifications may be made from what has been specifically described and illustrated whilst remaining within the scope of the invention as claimed.

CLAIMS.

1. A personal care kit comprising:
a tubular casing defining a chamber containing one or more personal care items, the chamber being provided with removable closure means;
wherein the removable closure means incorporates a dispenser unit for delivering a personal care product therefrom.
2. A personal care kit according to claim 1, wherein the dispenser unit includes a reservoir containing the product to be dispensed.
3. A personal care kit according to claim 1 or claim 2, wherein the spray dispenser unit is in the form of an aerosol dispenser or a pump-action spray dispenser.
4. A personal care kit according to claim 3, wherein the personal care product to be dispensed is selected from any of the following: deodorant, antiperspirant, perfume, body spray.
5. A personal care kit according to any preceding claim, wherein the chamber closure means comprises the said dispenser unit, together with a removable lid section which fits thereover.
6. A personal care kit according to any preceding claim, wherein the tubular casing is cylindrical.
7. A personal care kit according to claim 6, wherein the tubular casing is shaped and dimensioned such that the complete kit resembles a conventional aerosol can.

8. A personal care kit according to any preceding claim, wherein the tubular casing defines upper and lower chambers each for containing one or more of the said personal care items, the upper chamber being provided with the said removable closure means incorporating the said dispenser unit, and the lower chamber being provided with its own respective removable closure means.
9. A personal care kit according to claim 8, wherein the upper and lower chambers are defined by a dividing wall or an internal flange or one or more internal ledges or lugs.
10. A personal care kit according to any preceding claim, wherein the base of the chamber, or at least one of the upper and lower chambers, as the case may be, contains a removable seating disc which is removable from the said chamber to assist release of the personal care items therefrom.
11. A personal care kit according to claim 10, wherein attached to the seating disc is an upstanding pull-tab for assisting removal of the disc from the said chamber.
12. A personal care kit according to claim 10 or claim 11, wherein the seating disc is dimensioned so as to provide an air gap between its edges and the inner wall of the said chamber.
13. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 1 to 9, wherein the one or more personal care items in the chamber, or at least one of the upper and lower chambers, as the case may be, are contained in a removable tubular receptacle within the said chamber.
14. A personal care kit according to claim 13, wherein the tubular receptacle has a geometrically similar cross-sectional shape to the said chamber such as to be slidable therewithin with a snug sliding fit.

15. A personal care kit according to claim 13 or claim 14, wherein the tubular receptacle has a closed bottom.

16. A personal care kit according to claim 15, wherein the bottom of the tubular receptacle has one or more through-holes formed therein for the expelling of air as the receptacle is slid into the said chamber.

17. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 13 to 16, wherein the tubular receptacle has a plurality of separate compartments defined by one or more internal walls within its internal space.

18. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 13 to 17, wherein there is provided a pull-tab attached to an upper edge of the tubular receptacle to assist its removal from the said chamber.

19. A container for containing one or more personal care items to form a personal care kit according to any preceding claim, the container comprising:
the said tubular casing defining the said chamber or upper and lower chambers (as the case may be) for containing the said one or more personal care items of the kit;
the said removable closure means for the or each (as the case may be) said chamber;
wherein incorporated in the said closure means of the said chamber or upper chamber (as the case may be) is the said dispenser unit.

20. A container according to claim 19, further including any of the features of the personal care kits as defined in any one of claims 1 to 18.

21. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 1 to 18, which is in the form of a woman's sanitary kit, the personal care item(s) being one or more

of any of the following: tampons, panty liners, sanitary disposal bags, disinfectant or fresh wipes, condoms, spare underwear.

22. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 1 to 18, which is in the form of a medical kit, the personal care item(s) being one or more of any of the following: plasters, dressings, bandages, cotton wool/pads, sticky tape, disinfectants, antiseptic or other treatment creams, tweezers, scissors, pins, pharmaceuticals.

23. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 1 to 18, which is in the form of a travel kit, the personal care item(s) being one or more of any of the following: everyday toiletries, sun creams or lotions, sunburn treatment agents, insect repellents.

24. A personal care kit according to any one of claims 1 to 18, which is in the form of a men's toiletry kit, the personal care item(s) being one or more of any of the following: male toiletries, shaving cream, razors, aftershave products.

25. A personal care kit, or a container for containing one or more personal care items to form a personal care kit, substantially as described herein with reference to any of the accompanying drawings.



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Application No: GB 0207679.2
Claims searched: 1-25

Examiner: Stephen Smith
Date of search: 22 August 2002

Patents Act 1977 Search Report under Section 17

Databases searched:

UK Patent Office collections, including GB, EP, WO & US patent specifications, in:

UK CI (Ed.T): B8C(CPA, CWA3), B8D(DA, DSC2)

Int CI (Ed.7): A45C 5/00, 11/00, 11/24; B65D 51/28, 77/04

Other: ONLINE: EPODOC, PAJ, WPI

Documents considered to be relevant:

Category	Identity of document and relevant passage	Relevant to claims
X	GB 564499 (SANDOR) line 96 of page 1 to line 41 of page 2	1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 19, 20, 22, 24
X	WO 01/13816 A1 (VAN DER WESTHUIZEN) lines 15-31 of page 4	1, 2, 5, 6, 19, 20, 23
X	US 5848731 (DEERING) lines 41-50 of column 2	1, 2, 5, 6, 19, 20, 23
X	US 5397017 (MUZA) lines 39-48 of column 1	1, 2, 6, 19, 20, 22
X	US 1626312 (TIPTON) lines 71-104 of page 1	1, 2, 6, 13-15, 19, 20, 23

X	Document indicating lack of novelty or inventive step	A	Document indicating technological background and/or state of the art.
Y	Document indicating lack of inventive step if combined with one or more other documents of same category.	P	Document published on or after the declared priority date but before the filing date of this invention.
&	Member of the same patent family	E	Patent document published on or after, but with priority date earlier than, the filing date of this application.